

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a modified atmosphere package, comprising:

supplying a first package including a non-barrier portion substantially permeable to oxygen;

placing a retail cut of raw meat within the first package;

sealing the first package;

supplying a second package substantially impermeable to oxygen;

covering the first package with the second package without sealing the second package so as to create a pocket between the first and second packages;

supplying a mixture of gases into the pocket, the gas mixture comprising from about 0.1 to about 0.8 vol.% carbon monoxide and at least one other gas to form a low oxygen environment so as to form carboxymyoglobin on a surface of the raw meat;

removing oxygen from the pocket so as to sufficiently reduce an oxygen level therein so as to inhibit or prevent the formation of metmyoglobin on the surface of the raw meat; and

sealing the second package, wherein the carbon monoxide associated with the raw meat within the first package is adapted to be removable.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 further including supplying an oxygen scavenger.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 further including supplying an oxygen scavenger, activating the oxygen scavenger with an oxygen scavenger accelerator, and positioning the oxygen scavenger external to the first package such that the oxygen scavenger is capable of absorbing oxygen within the pocket, the activated oxygen scavenger aggressively

absorbing any residual oxygen in the modified atmosphere package.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the activated oxygen scavenger reduces the oxygen level within the modified atmosphere package to approximately zero percent in less than about 24 hours.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the oxygen level of the pocket is less than 1,000 ppm.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein the oxygen level of the pocket is less than about 500 ppm.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein removing oxygen from the pocket includes evacuating the pocket.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein removing oxygen from the pocket includes flushing the pocket with the gas mixture.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the gas mixture further comprises nitrogen, carbon dioxide or the combination thereof.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the gas mixture further consists essentially of nitrogen, carbon dioxide or the combination thereof.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the gas mixture consists essentially of from about 0.1 to about 0.8 vol. % carbon monoxide, from about 40 to about 80 vol.% nitrogen and from about 20 to about 60 vol.% carbon dioxide.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the gas mixture consists of from about 0.1 to about 0.8 vol.% carbon monoxide with the remainder carbon dioxide.

13. (Original) The method of claim 1 further including removing the second package from the first package before retailing.

14. (Original) The method of claim 1 further including removing the second package from the first package so as to allow the raw meat to be exposed to ambient atmosphere, the raw meat having color degradation similar to a fresh cut of the same raw meat.

15. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the second package is adapted to be removable from at least a portion of the first package without destroying the first package.

16. (Original) The method of claim 1 further including placing the retail cut of raw meat on a foam tray.

17. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the non-barrier portion comprises a polyolefin or a polyvinyl chloride overwrap.

18. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the gas mixture is supplied to the pocket such that the oxymyoglobin substantially converts directly to carboxymyoglobin.

19. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the oxymyoglobin substantially converts to deoxymyoglobin before the gas mixture is supplied to the pocket so as to convert deoxymyoglobin directly to carboxymyoglobin.

20. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the gas mixture comprises from about 0.3 to about 0.5 vol.% carbon monoxide.

21. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the gas mixture comprises from about 0.1 to about 0.5 vol.% carbon monoxide.

22. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a modified atmosphere package, comprising:

supplying a first package including a non-barrier portion substantially permeable to oxygen;

placing a retail cut of raw meat within the first package;

sealing the first package;

supplying a second package substantially impermeable to oxygen;

covering the first package with the second package without sealing the second package so as to create a pocket between the first and second packages;

supplying a mixture of gases into the pocket, the gas mixture comprising from about 0.1 to about 0.8 vol.% carbon monoxide and at least one other gas to form a low oxygen environment, the gas mixture being supplied so as to substantially convert the oxymyoglobin directly to carboxymyoglobin on a surface of the raw meat;

removing oxygen from the pocket so as to reduce an oxygen level sufficiently therein so as to inhibit or prevent the formation of metmyoglobin on the surface of the raw meat; and

sealing the second package, wherein the carbon monoxide associated with the raw meat within the first package is adapted to be removable.

23. (Original) The method of claim 22 further including supplying an oxygen scavenger.

24. (Original) The method of claim 22 further including supplying an oxygen scavenger, activating the oxygen scavenger with an oxygen scavenger accelerator, and positioning the oxygen scavenger external to the first package such that the oxygen scavenger is capable of absorbing oxygen within the pocket, the activated oxygen scavenger aggressively absorbing any residual oxygen in the modified atmosphere package.

25. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the oxygen level of the pocket is less than 1,000 ppm.

26. (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein the oxygen level of the pocket is less than about 500 ppm.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 22, wherein removing oxygen from the pocket includes evacuating the pocket.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 22, wherein removing oxygen from the pocket includes flushing the pocket with the gas mixture.

29. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the gas mixture further comprises nitrogen, carbon dioxide or the combination thereof.

30. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the gas mixture consists essentially of from about 0.1 to about 0.8 vol.% carbon monoxide, from about 40 to about 80 vol.% nitrogen and from about 20 to about 60 vol.% carbon dioxide.

31. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the gas mixture consists of from about 0.1 to about 0.8 vol.% carbon monoxide with the remainder carbon dioxide.

32. (Original) The method of claim 22 further including removing the second package from the first package before retailing.

33. (Original) The method of claim 22 further including removing the second package from the first package so as to allow the raw meat to be exposed to ambient atmosphere, the raw meat having color degradation similar to a fresh cut of the same raw meat.

34. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the second package is adapted to be removable from at least a portion of the first package without destroying the first package.

35. (Original) The method of claim 22 further including placing the retail cut of raw meat on a foam tray and the non-barrier portion comprises a polyolefin or a polyvinyl chloride overwrap.

36. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the gas mixture comprises from about 0.3 to about 0.5 vol.% carbon monoxide.

37. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the gas mixture comprises from about 0.1 to about 0.5 vol.% carbon monoxide.

38-86. Withdrawn

87. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein after sealing the first and second packages, the modified atmosphere package is modified so as to allow the raw meat to be exposed to ambient atmosphere.

88. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 87, wherein the modified atmosphere package is modified by having the second package removed from at least a portion of the first package so as to allow the raw meat to be exposed to ambient atmosphere.

89. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 22, wherein after sealing the first and second packages, the modified atmosphere package is modified so as to allow the raw meat to be exposed to ambient atmosphere.

90. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 89, wherein after sealing the first and second packages, the modified atmosphere package is modified so as to allow the raw meat to be exposed to ambient atmosphere.

91-160. Withdrawn

161. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a modified atmosphere package, comprising:

supplying a first package including a non-barrier portion substantially permeable to oxygen;

placing a retail cut of raw meat within the first package;

wrapping the first package with a polyolefin or a polyvinyl chloride overwrap;

supplying a second package substantially impermeable to oxygen;

covering the first package with the second package without sealing the second package so as to create a pocket between the first and second packages;

supplying a mixture of gases into the pocket, the gas mixture comprising from about 0.3 to about 0.5 vol.% carbon monoxide and at least one other gas to form a low oxygen environment so as to form carboxymyoglobin on a surface of the raw meat; and

removing oxygen from the pocket so as to sufficiently reduce an oxygen level therein so as to inhibit or prevent the formation of metmyoglobin on the surface of the raw meat.

sealing the second package wherein the carbon monoxide associated with the raw meat within the first package is adapted to be removable.

162. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 161 further including supplying an oxygen scavenger.

163. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 161, wherein removing oxygen from the pocket includes evacuating the pocket.

164. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 161, wherein removing oxygen from the pocket includes flushing the pocket with the gas mixture.

165. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 161, wherein the gas mixture further comprises nitrogen, carbon dioxide or the combination thereof.

166. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 161, wherein the gas mixture further consists essentially of nitrogen, carbon dioxide or the combination thereof.

167. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 161 further including removing the second package from the first package before retailing.

168. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 161 further including removing the second package from the first package so as to allow the raw meat to be exposed to ambient atmosphere, the raw meat having color degradation similar to a fresh cut of the same raw meat.

169. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 161, wherein the second package is adapted to be removable from at least a portion of the first package without destroying the first package.

170. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 161, wherein after wrapping the first package and sealing the second package, the modified atmosphere package is modified so as to allow the raw meat to be exposed to ambient atmosphere.

171. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 170, wherein the modified atmosphere package is modified by having the second package removed from at least a portion of the first package so as to allow the raw meat to be exposed to ambient atmosphere.

172-189. Withdrawn